The council, taking into consideration the importance of encouraging every branch of art, and of varying their plans, with a view to the pleasure of the members, propose to issue for the ensuing year a series of thirty illustrations of Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, engraved on wood in the best manner. The following artists have already undertaken to supply designs: J. Absolon, E. H. Corbould, M. Claxton, W. Dyce, E. Duncan, A. Elmore, J. Franklin, F. Goodall, J. Gilbert, J. P. Knight, R.A., W. L. Leitch, Kenny Meadows, H. O'Neil, F. Pickersgill, J. N. Paton, P. F. Poole, H. C. Selous, F. W. Topham, W. C. Thomas, J. Tenniel, E. H. Wehnert, H. Warren, E. M. Ward. Every subscriber will receive a copy of this work for each guinea subscribed.

For a future year, Mr. Frost's "Sabrina," engraved by Mr. Lightfoot, is in progress; and the council have arranged with Mr. William Finden to produce for the association an engraving of large size, and in his best manner, after Hilton's picture, "The Crucifixion," now in the possession of the corporation of Liverpool.

A statement of the engraving-account, still open, will be printed with this report.

The council alluded in the last report to their intention of producing some work of acknowledged excellence in *cast-iron*, with the view of further promoting the connection between manufactures and art. In accordance with this desire they commissioned Mr. Nixon, sculptor, to make a reduced model of a figure of "Thalia," in the gallery of antiquities at the British Museum," which has been ably done, and is now ready for casting. The right to thirty copies of it will be allotted to-day.

Since the last meeting, the council have been deprived by death of the valued assistance of Mr. Morant, one of the earliest members of the society. Sir John Jervis, M.P., her Majesty's Attorney General, has been elected to fill the vacancy thus created.

Under a bye-law in a code recently made for the regulation of the society, as required by the Charter, four vacancies in the council will be declared annually, and four new members elected to fill them.

The reserved fund now amounts to the sum of 2,195*l.* 16*s.* 4*d.* With the view of increasing this fund more rapidly, for the purpose of obtaining a gallery and assisting in carrying out efficiently the great objects of the society, it is proposed that a reserve of 2½ per cent. of the amount of each annual subscription (or 6*d.* in the pound), shall be made.

The council consider this fund to be of the greatest importance to the permanent prosperity of the association, and they invite all who think with them, and are members of the association on other than selfish motives, to pay their subscription early in the year, by which means a considerable addition in the shape of interest would be made to it annually, without any personal sacrifice.

With this same end in view, and at the suggestion of subscribers who objected to the trouble of an annual payment, it is proposed to receive subscriptions *in advance*; and it is resolved that "each member who pays for ten or more years, shall receive one of the society's medals in silver at the time of payment, in addition to the advantage to which he may be annually entitled." In the event of the death of a member so subscribing, the amount will merge in the funds of the society.

The following is a statement of the receipts and disbursements:—

The cost of obtaining the charter was 407*l.* 17*s.*—but as this is an expenditure made for the advantage of future, as well as present members, the council propose to charge the present year's subscription with a portion of it only, and to charge the four succeeding years in like manner.

Expenses as per general account ..	£ 2,491	1	7
2½ per cent. carried to the reserved fund	446	15	6
Sums allotted for statuettes in bronze, porcelain, cast-iron, and plaster; also medals and lithographs	1,090	0	0
Estimated amount for engravings, paper, &c., of prints	1,813	2	11
Ditto, ditto, outlines	1,300	0	0
Set apart for expenditure of prize-holders	10,730	0	0
	£17,871	0	0

The amount set apart, according to this statement, for the purchase of works of art, viz., 10,730*l.*, will be thus allotted:—

30	Works at £10		£300
40	,, 15		600
36	,, 20		720
36	,, 25		900
28	,, 30		840
28	,, 40		1,120
20	,, 50		1,000
15	,, 60		900
12	,, 70		840
12	,, 80		960
6	,, 100		600
5	,, 150		750
3	,, 200		600
2	,, 300		600
			£10,730

To these are to be added twenty bronzes of "Iris Ascending;" fifty statuettes of "Innocence;" thirty casts in iron of "Thalia;" 273 lithographs of "La Fleur's Departure," and thirty silver medals commemorative of Flaxman.

Mr. Marshall's group, "The First Whisper of Love," commissioned by the council for a prizeholder of 1845, having proved very satisfactory, the council thought it desirable to prepare thirty casts of it in plaster, and these will also be included in the distribution to-day, making in the whole 706 works of art. The total sum thus appropriated, including the cost of outlines and engravings, is 14,933*l.* 2*s.* 11*d.*

To shorten the time occupied in the distribution, a similar course to that adopted last year is proposed.

The bronzes will be allotted to the first twenty names drawn consecutively at the close of the general distribution; the casts of the "First Whisper of Love," will be allotted to the next thirty names similarly drawn; the casts in iron of "Thalia," to the next thirty names similarly drawn; the statuettes of "Innocence," to the next fifty names; the medals to the following thirty; and each subscriber whose name is found to stand in the subscription-list next after each of the prize-holders in the general distribution, will be entitled to receive a lithograph. Notice of the latter will be sent in the course of two days. The other prizeholders will receive intimation of the result by to-night's post.

The desire felt by the council to have such a selection made by the prizeholders as may confer credit on the association, and aid in properly carrying out its real purpose, has been constantly expressed by them. Now, however, and always, they would repeat it; urging prizeholders to consider the Art-Union an instrument for the encouragement and diffusion of art, and not a company for securing personal advantages to the subscribers. The council invite them most seriously to consider well before making their selection, and in the event of a want of acquaintance with art, to seek the assistance of qualified friends.

The desirability of confining the right of selection to the council has recently been mooted. Your council would greatly deplore such a change, and furthermore would consider it their duty to oppose it by every means in their power, as being calculated not merely to *lessen* the good effects of the association, but ultimately to destroy it altogether, and to do great injury to art and artists. The council are confirmed by experience in the opinion already expressed by them on other occasions, that by placing the selection in the hands of the prizeholders themselves, much good is done. Great additional interest in the subject is excited, personal inquiry and examination are induced, comparison between works is instituted, and knowledge obtained. In this way, too, all classes of art-works find a market; whereas were the selections all made by the same five or six individuals, a bias would exist even with the best intentions towards works of some particular character and style, to say nothing of the possibility of personal favouritism, and thus injury would be done to other classes of art. It should be remembered, too, in discussing this question fully, which cannot be attempted here, that, under the present arrangements, a large sum is annually added by the prize-holders to the amount expended by the Art-Union on works of art, which could not be the case if the pictures were selected by a committee. Moreover, allowing the prizeholders to select is so much more popular than the contrary course would be, that the change could not fail to lessen the number of subscribers most materially, thus interfering with one great object of the society, that of interesting the masses in matters of art, and affording them the means of enjoying them.

To familiarize the people at large with the best productions of art is the first step towards ensuring such a progress in the arts as may be called national. Until now, large numbers of even the educated public have been ignorant of the best characteristics of art, and unable fully to enjoy the intellectual pleasures it offers. When a people sympathize in art, find enjoyment in it, and feel it to be an indispensible need, they will become their own educators, but not till then: and then only may artists be expected to achieve great things. "The arts," as a recent American writer remarks, "are no luxury, no mere ornament and stimulus to a civic and complicated existence, as the worldling and the ascetic alike delight in representing them to be, but the herbarium in which are preserved the fairest flowers of man's existence; the magic mirror, by whose aid all its phases are interpreted, the circle into which the various spirits of the elements may be invoked, and made to reveal the secret they elsewhere manifest only in large revolutions of time; and what philosophy with careful steps and anxious ear has long sought in vain, is oftentimes revealed at once by a flash from this torch."

A true education in art has been defined to consist in a lively susceptibility of the emotion of beauty, and in a fixed determination of the principle of taste towards that which is beautiful, analogous to that of the reason towards truth and reality,—rather than in acquaintance with works of art, or even accurate perception of the beauties of any particular work.

The perception of truth, and harmony, and beauty, where obscure and disguised, is one of the distinctions of genius. To make these visible to all is one of its powers.

Art should form a part of general education, and will do so, it may be hoped, before long. It may be made to assist *in* education most materially. If, as desired by the ancients, none but beautiful forms were permitted in the assemblies of the young; if noble and holy actions gracefully set forth every where met the eye; and our rooms were hung with fine thoughts instead of unmeaning patterns,—the effect on the national mind would be much greater than would be believed by those who have not fully considered the subject.

Art shews us man as he can by no other means be made known; art gives us "nobler loves and nobler cares,"—furnishing objects, by the contemplation of which we are taught and exalted,—and so are ultimately led to seek Beauty in its highest form, which is,—Goodness.

Your council terminate their report by again urging the prizeholders so to exercise their right of selection, as to furnish an additional argument in support of their views on this subject.

George Godwin, } Hon. Secs.
Lewis Pocock. }

Mr. Serjeant Thompson, F.S.A., in moving the adoption of the report (which was seconded by Mr. Auldjo, F.R.S.), dwelt at some length on the advantage of allowing the prizeholders themselves to select the works of art. So many questions, the learned gentleman said, have arisen with reference to the subject of Art-Unions, that I am extremely glad to have the honour of meeting such an assemblage as that now before me, to whose approbation or disapprobation the sentiments contained in the report may be submitted. If it pleases this assembly to shew their approbation of these sentiments, then we shall be surprised should any difficulty hereafter arise, which we shall not have the means to meet and overcome. As is stated in the report, it has been suggested that a committee should be appointed for the purpose of determining what works shall be taken as prizes. But the principle adopted by the association is, that that should be left to the prizeholders themselves, who receive a sum of money to spend with the freedom of Englishmen, regard being had to the arts in this country. It is with this view, and in order that the knowledge of art might be enforced and increased among us, that the rule now acted on has been laid down. It is said, however, that the arts are not encouraged

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